



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: February 7, 2023
RE: January 2023 Staff SOC Report

January Client Complaints and Investigations

There were six formal complaints submitted through the SMC in January 2023.

Note: Frequently the SMC staff receive tentative complaints that the complainant never follows up on. That is, they do not provide minimally necessary details, or they do not approve our draft of a complaint that they have not themselves completed in writing. These are not included in this report. Narratives provide an overview of the types of complaints forwarded to each site. Not all sites have had a chance to respond to the complaints. Complaints may have already been investigated to the satisfaction of the site or its contracting agency; however, the Committee must allow for each complainant to review the responses and the complainant determines whether s/he is satisfied. If the complainant is not satisfied, the Committee will investigate the allegations listed in the complaint.

ECS Sanctuary

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/07/2023

Response received: 1/12/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...

Complaint #1 SOC 2 (Safety)

- The complainant states that staff did nothing when he reported being sexually assaulted. This followed threats that were reported not long before. Staff told the complainant they had to be physically present to see a crime committed or there was nothing they could or would do. As far as the client knows, no follow up or investigation (e.g., review video surveillance or question potential witnesses) was done, despite the extremely serious nature of what the client reported. The client felt the shelter was not fulfilling its obligation to provide services in an environment that is safe and free of physical violence. He reported the sexual assault to the San Francisco Police Department.
- The shelter states that the client did not describe the actual threats that were made. There was no sign he had been involved in a physical altercation. Staff promptly investigated and found nothing to corroborate his report. SFPD responded to the call, but there was no engagement between SFPD and ECS staff.

Pending – The complainant has not yet requested an investigation into the complaint

Next Door

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/12/2023

Response received: 1/15/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 28:** Provide clients access to free laundry service...

Complaint #1 (SOC # 1):

- The complainant/client states that procedures calling for laundry to be bagged up and left on his bed, to be picked up for laundry services, led to his bag of clothing being lost or stolen. Client asked for reimbursement for this lost clothing.
- On the day in question the client did not turn in his laundry. Guests may choose not to stay in the shelter in their bed area during their laundry times. That is a risk the guest takes. HSH policy (2G) is that all personal items must be locked when they are not at their bed area. During intake the client was given a lock and provided a copy of the HSH Rules as well as the Site S Program Rules. Rule #3 states that Five Keys is not responsible for any lost, misplaced, or stolen items. They offered the client donated clothes, but he declined.

Complaint #2 (SOC #28):

- The client stated that due to the procedure of how laundry is done, he no longer will feel safe to have his laundry handled by staff. Therefore, he is now compelled to go outside of the facilities to do his laundry at his own expense.
- The guest has the right to take his clothes outside the facility to do his laundry at his cost. Management spoke with the client about him not feeling safe regarding his laundry. He thinks someone is stealing his laundry for reasons that management was unable to confirm.

Monarch

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/13/2023

Response received: 1/20/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...

Complaint #1 (SOC #1):

- The client/complainant states shelter staff lost or misappropriated his property. Five days before Christmas, he returned to the shelter with two blue-tooth speakers (presents for family) but was not allowed to bring these past security to his room. Staff stored them; however, four days later, when he asked for the items, one of them was gone. There was no record of what he had left in the shelter's care. The on-site manager was unhelpful and offered no options to the client. The client would like to be reimbursed for this lost item.

- The Monarch program manager states this guest asked her to review four days' worth of video footage to find out what happened to his item. They currently do not have cameras in room where the item was stored, but have decided to install cameras and would be willing to replace the missing item if the client can provide some type of proof of purchase.

Division Circle

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/20/2023

Response received: 1/25/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...

Complaint #1 (SOC #2):

- Complainant was in the men's restroom in the evening of January 14, when another guest pulled a switchblade knife and said, "I'm gonna kill you, fag." He asked for assistance immediately, but the shelter did not take appropriate steps to protect him. The supervisor admitted he knows the perpetrator; others have complained about him. However, staff failed to cooperate in an effective way with the police. The site director would not speak with the complainant, who made multiple attempts to discuss the situation with him; nor did he respond to Victim's Services staff. The client is concerned that there are weapons inside the walls, staff are negligent, and the individual who threatened him is violent and unpredictable.
- De-escalation possibly could have been handled better, but the shelter is committed to the safety and welfare of guests. Management will follow up with staff to make sure all are prepared for conflicts. It is standard practice for guests to be thoroughly screened upon entry, as is having police interactions outside the grounds except in very unusual circumstances.

AWP Drop-In

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/21/2023

Response received: 1/26/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 2:** Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...
- **Standard 3:** ... hire janitorial staff to clean shelters on a daily basis

Complaint #1 (SOC 2)

- The client alleges there "are three men currently staying at the drop in who are falsely claiming to be transgender." Their conversation made this clear. The client witnessed two of these individuals harassing female guests, e.g., referring to her as a "bitch" and a "whore." She believes these guests present what could reasonably be seen as a hazard to the women at the

site and that staff are not responsibly screening new clients. Their response to the complainant's concerns were discouraging, i.e., that it was none of her business.

- The shelter responded that all Community Forward SF employees have completed the DPH Training. CFSF, prides itself on helping all women—CIS and transgender women—and do not discriminate based on looks or tones of voices. The Drop-In Center offers low-threshold, drop-in services targeted to the complex needs of all women. They provide all women with dignity and respect at all times and encourage everyone—staff and clients—to do the same. They also provide St. Anthony's security guards that are there during the swing and grave shifts, as are two or three employees of CFSF, to provide as much safety as possible during business hours. During the day, at least six staffers are always on-site.

Complaint #2 (SOCs 1 and 3)

- When the janitor comes in the morning, the shelter has unreasonable rules preventing access to the bathroom and laundry. The janitor does not finish cleaning till 2PM. It is unreasonable to close all bathrooms and showers for so long. Staff has reprimanded the guest for asking to shower when she has to do so prior to departing the site.
- The response indicated that showers are available between 6:00AM and 9:00AM, then closed for deep cleaning from 9:00AM-2:30AM. However, they are willing to try to accommodate guests case-by-case. There are three client restrooms in the Drop-In Center and all women have access as long as the janitor is not cleaning. Showers are open for use again 2:30PM-8:00PM. Moving forward the Drop-In staff will allow clients to take showers in the front area showers while the janitor is working in the back. The VP of Women's Services will provide further training with all staff about customer service skills when working with guests.

Complaint #3 (SOC 1)

- Staff yelled at the complainant while she was trying to interview for a job. The client was in the back, where it was quieter. She knew this was technically not allowed, but the response of one staffer was quite uncaring. She is trying to obtain employment, which is hard enough to do while unhoused without rude exclamations being made audibly in the background.
- The shelter responded that the complaint has made a reasonable point. From now on, when clients need to use their cell phones for employment and/or other benefit or medical conversations, the Drop-In staff will allow them to use the staff conference room or a staff office, if room is available.

Monarch

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 1/27/2023

Response received: 2/06/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 2:** Safety...
- **Standard 13:** Make the shelter available for sleeping at least 8 hours per night....
- **Standard 23:** Emergency disaster plan...

Complaint #1 (SOC 1)

- The client/complainant states concerns have largely been ignored. The manager of the site has been disrespectful, even making light of the medical difficulties of another client within the hearing of Monarch clients.
- Note that this alleged incident was over 90 days old when reported. However, the shelter responded that a manager shared a story about someone in another program who had a serious medical issue, to illustrate for staff what needs to be done in like situations. The guest misinterpreted what she overheard, became upset, and did not accept the explanation given.

Complaint #2 (SOC 1)

- The client reports that information on how to file a complaint with the city is not given to guests upon arrival at the Monarch. Additionally, guests do not know if any action is taken or even if any record is made of their complaint.
- This program opened in August. It took time to receive and review all of the paperwork that was involved. They now have the proper paperwork, and it is available for any guest who wishes to lodge a complaint.

Complaint #3 (SOCs #2, #23):

- The fire detection and mitigation setup in the building is inadequate. In December a resident brought in a butane torch into their room and started a fire. The client smelled smoke and there was smoke in the hallway; however, no fire alarm went off. Again in January, the client smelled something burning. The smell was very apparent in the hallway. Again, no fire alarm went off. When she asked what was going on, staff rudely told her it was “being handled.” Complainant suspects incident reports were not filed subsequent to these events, nor is she aware of any improvements, e.g., additional smoke detectors.
- The shelter states that their fire detection system is checked on a regular basis by the fire department. It is fully functioning. The guest thinks an alarm should have gone off, but the fires were started and put out immediately. The fires were very small and did not impact the safety of the hotel or the guests that were in the room where the fires started.

Complaint #4 (SOC #2):

- Staff are not thoroughly checking bags when people come into the hotel. Guests bring in dangerous materials, e.g., in one case a blow torch.
- Management has gone over the correct way to check bags with the security on staff at the Monarch. They are following the correct protocol.

Complaint #5 (SOCs #1, #13):

- Residents come and go in the middle of the night, making noise. Staff have to key each guest into their room, so they are aware of the noise being made, yet often do nothing about it. There is one guest who screams day or night. Staff are not properly enforcing the rules or following up on legitimate complaints to ensure guests are able to get eight hours to sleep per night.
- Guests are coming in and out of the hotel at all hours. Staff tries to keep the noise to a minimum. Some people are more sensitive to noise than others; and some have behavioral health challenges. Management brought Behavioral Health Services in to help the guest referred to by the

complainant, with good results. They also offered to switch the complainant to a different room, but she refused. The shelter does its best to consider the needs of all of their client-guests.

Complaint #6 (SOC #1):

- A guest has been allowed to be verbally abusive to female staff but will quiet down for male staffers. The bias and discrimination is clear. Management had previously failed to provide female staff with the process to be used to report it when they are harassed. Staffers' complaints to their supervisors and manager have been effectively ignored for months now, and they have had to endure continued verbal abuse.
- The shelter understands that many of their guests are experiencing mental or substance abuse problems. The complainant's concern about the staff is appreciated. However, staff have been trained in cultural sensitivity and de-escalation. They put their knowledge to use regularly. They do not take outbursts personally and, within reason, do not hold them against the guests.

January 2023 Client Complaints by Standard

Standard of Care	Number of complaints alleging violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity, including in the application of shelter policies...	4
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...	4
Standard 3: ... hire janitorial staff to clean shelters on a daily basis	1
Standard 13: Make the shelter available for sleeping at least 8 hours per night...	1
Standard 23: Emergency disaster plan...	1
Standard 28: Provide clients access to free laundry service...	1

Note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one Standard of Care

Lark Inn	1	0	0	1									2
MSC South Shelter	0	0	1	0									1
Next Door	0	0	1	0									1
A Woman's Place*	0	0	0	0									0
Providence Family	0	0	1	0									1
MNRC*	0	0	1	0									1
Dolores*	0	0	1	0									1
Sanctuary	0	0	1	0									1
St. Joseph's Family	1	0	1	0									2
*New Site													
Total	3	0	9	3	0	15							

The SMC is required to complete four unannounced visits to each site on an annual basis.

FY2022-2023 Announced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total
711 Post St. ²					1								1
Buena Vista Horace Mann													0
Compass Family													0
Hamilton Family													0
Harbor House Family													0
Lark Inn													0
MSC South													0
Next Door													0
A Woman's Place ¹			1										1
Providence Family													0
MNRC*													
Dolores*													
Sanctuary													0
St. Joseph's Family													0
¹ New Sept ² New Oct													
Total	0	0	1	0	1								2

The Committee is required to make two announced site visits to each site each year to survey clients.

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Meetings

Committee meetings will be held at City Hall, Rm. 408, effective March 15, 2023.

Pending Legislation

The Board of Supervisors is reviewing amendments to the Administrative Code required by Proposition C, to establish a new “Homelessness Oversight Commission.” This will impact the SMC. See their [file 230125](#).

Membership

There are currently two unfilled seats on the Shelter Monitoring Committee:

Board of Supervisors:

Seat 1 – Must be homeless or formerly homeless who is living or has lived with their child under age 18.

LHCB:

Seat 7 – Must be nominated by a service provider.

If you are interested in applying for a seat on the Committee, please contact Angie David at 415-255-3642 or email angella.david@sfdph.org for more information.

FY2022-2023 Upcoming Meeting Calendar

- March 15, 2023 (in-person)
- April 19, 2023 (in-person)
- May 17, 2023 (in-person)
- June 21, 2023 (in-person)